

# When God Calls The Common: Amos

## Amos 8:4-14

Imagine, if you will, a famine of God's Word. This is hard to do, since in our religious culture we have an embarrassment of spiritual riches—teachers, conferences, workshops, Bible versions, and commentaries. We have everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3) where God's Word is concerned. But what if we lived in a land where God's truth could no longer be accessed? Beloved, what would we do without the truth? Jesus stated in John 14:6:

### **John 14:6**

*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

He was referring to Himself as the only way to the Father—salvation was found only in Him (Acts 4:12). And once we are saved, we grow in the grace and knowledge of that same Jesus (2 Peter 3:18) only through the Word of God.

When Jesus was being tempted in the desert by Satan:

### **Matthew 4:3**

*And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.*

Jesus responded to the Evil One with this amazing truth:

### **Matthew 4:4**

*But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

As born-again believers, we need God's Word to live.

But we can't take for granted that God's Word will always be there. Persecution and spiritual oppression is rising among the nations. People hate God, they hate Jesus, and they hate God's Word. They do not want truth in their lives. However, for those of us who are saved, the Word of God is the *power of God*:

### **1Corinthians 1:18**

*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*

### **Hebrews 4:12**

*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

### **Amos 8:4**

*(KJV) Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail,  
(NIV) Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land,*

Oh, the disobedience of Israel! Their perpetual sin here expressed through their oppression—or taking advantage of—the poor. Their ultimate aim was to eliminate the poor, those who could not defend themselves. Incredulous as it may seem, the oppressors here are the ones who claim to know God! But now their cup of iniquity has overflowed, and God's mercy is exhausted. He would now exact punishment.

### **Amos 8:5**

*(KJV) Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?  
(NIV) saying, "When will the New Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?"— skimping on the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales,*

These disobedient Israelites could not wait to get their religious ceremonies out of the way so that they could return to their corrupt trading and money making. Unfortunately, it would be the poor that paid the highest price as they were cheated and robbed of any legitimate produce and profit.

### **Amos 8:6**

*(KJV) That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat?  
(NIV) buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat.*

To the Israelites, this is all the poor are worth! Just a handful of silver or a pair of shoes, and throw in some wheat scraps. Again, we ask ourselves—will not God rise up and avenge the poor? Of course He will!

### **Amos 8:7**

*(KJV) The LORD hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works.  
(NIV) The LORD has sworn by himself, the Pride of Jacob: "I will never forget anything they have done.*

Look at Amos 6:8:

### **Amos 6:8**

*The Lord GOD hath sworn by himself, saith the LORD the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein.*

Every covenant promise and privilege imparted to Israel is at stake here. God is not pleased, and He will not pass by his corrupt children in mercy any longer:

**Amos 8:2**

*And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me, The end is come upon my people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more.*

We need to remember that God's eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good (Proverbs 15:3). He also sees what is in the very depths of our hearts:

**Genesis 6:5**

*And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

Just as with Israel, when the cup of iniquity overflows in us, God must act out of His perfect justice. All sins must be paid for:

**Ecclesiastes 12:14**

*For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

*We need Jesus. We need the cross.*

**Hebrews 9:22**

*And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*

**Amos 8:8**

*(KJV) Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? and it shall rise up wholly as a flood; and it shall be cast out and drowned, as by the flood of Egypt.*

*(NIV) "Will not the land tremble for this, and all who live in it mourn? The whole land will rise like the Nile; it will be stirred up and then sink like the river of Egypt.*

Through the proclamation of Amos, here comes judgment through epic flooding over the land. Justice is served. All of the filthy lucre of corrupt trading will be no more because the crops will be no more. Everybody loses!

**Amos 8:9**

*(KJV) And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day:*

*(NIV) "In that day," declares the Sovereign LORD, "I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight.*

God, Creator of the universe, can darken our world at will. He has promised to do this over all of Israel, as He did in several places in the Bible, including Revelation.

**Revelations 6:12**

*And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;*

**Amos 8:10**

*(KJV) And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day.*

*(NIV) I will turn your religious festivals into mourning and all your singing into weeping. I will make all of you wear sackcloth and shave your heads. I will make that time like mourning for an only son and the end of it like a bitter day.*

Even while the Israelites are engaging in their religious ceremonies, God will suddenly turn these worship services into funeral services, replete with sorrow, mourning, lament, and bitter tears. It will be an awful transition.

And for each of us, in our walk with God, we need sober-mindedness, we need mourning over sin, and while interceding for the lost and backslidden. The world tries to tell us that we should live it up because life is a party. Then you die. The truth is—judgment comes after death:

**Hebrews 9:27** *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

This is why we must heed God's Word and not end up in a similar fate as the Israelites.

**Ecclesiastes 7:2**

*It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.*

**1Peter 1:13**

*Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

In order for us to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in any moment, our minds must be focused on God and His Word:

**Colossians 3:2** *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*

*Not on the world.*

**1John 2:15-17**

Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

### **Amos 8:12**

*(KJV) And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it.*

*(NIV) People will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east, searching for the word of the LORD, but they will not find it.*

While we may have storehouses full of Bibles and spiritual resources, Israel at this time did not. God could easily make His truth scarce, and He is about to do that here. Remember that His Word is our daily food, and without it we are left only with our own devices of the flesh. Presumption and pride will result.

### **James 4:13-17**

*Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

God hates presumption and pride:

### **Proverbs 6:16-17**

*These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,*

\*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: What would your life look like without the Word of God? Could you have a relationship with God apart from His Word?

\*STUDY POINT: Find three passages in the Old Testament where the Word of God was not acknowledged or heeded? What was the outcome? From Psalm 119, find 12 verses that stir up your hunger for and delight in Holy Scripture.

### **Amos 8:13**

*(KJV) In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst.*

*(NIV) "In that day "the lovely young women and strong young men will faint because of thirst.*

Thirst for water, thirst for living water. Both. And these are the youth!

### **Isaiah 40:30**

*Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:*

What of the rest of Israel—the infirm, the poor, the elderly? What would come of them without water? What would come of us without Jesus?

### **John 4:13-14**

*Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:*

*But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

### **Amos 8:14**

*(KJV) They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Beersheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.*

*(NIV) Those who swear by the sin of Samaria— who say, 'As surely as your god lives, Dan,' or, 'As surely as the god of Beersheba lives'— they will fall, never to rise again."*

From Dan to Beersheba, *the whole land* would be subject to God's wrath:

### **Judges 20:1**

*Then all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beersheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the LORD in Mizpeh.*

And what about Samaria's sin of idolatry? They, of all people should have known that worshipping idols always arouses the wrath of God:

### **Deuteronomy 9:21**

*And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, and ground it very small, even until it was as small as dust: and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount.*

### **Exodus 20:3-4**

*Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:*

The Israelites had amassed myriad idols to worship, but they would ultimately gain the punishment of their Heavenly Father, whom they had forsaken.

Beloved let us remember to value and delight in God's Word while we have it, and submit in love to its Author.

### **Luke 10:27**

*And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.*

Amen.

~ Reverend Darren McClelland